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land ; and flats, docks, and wharf rights obtained, of the extent of one hundred and forty-two thousand square feet. All this was accomplished in the centre of a populous city, not only without any tax, debt, or burden upon its pecuniary resources,—notwithstanding, in the course of the operations, funds to the amount of upwards of eleven hundred thousand dollars had been employed,—but with large permanent additions to its real and productive property. The proprietors of land in the north section of the city were also enabled by this improvement to open Fulton and Commercial Streets, thus greatly enlarging mercantile accommodations, facilitating intercourse with the great southern wharves, and creating opportunities for the foundation of those noble blocks of granite stores, which have since been erected to the eastward of those streets.” pp. 74, 75.

We have dwelt longer upon this volume than its local interest and importance may seem to justify. But we trust the reader is now prepared to believe that the history contained in it affords some curious illustrations of the working of our democratic institutions and the peculiarities of our national character. Those especially who have any interest in the conduct of municipal affairs may derive from it much profitable instruction ; and we are sure they will lay it down with a hearty feeling of admiration and respect for the eminent public services and manly character of its author.

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#### ART. X—CRITICAL NOTICES.

- 1.—*History of the United States, from the Discovery of the American Continent*. By GEORGE BANCROFT. Vol. IV. *The American Revolution. Epoch First. The Overthrow of the European Colonial System, 1748 – 1763*. Boston : Little & Brown. 1852. 8vo.

THE public have waited with some impatience for the continuation of Mr. Bancroft's *History of the United States*. The earlier volumes, with some peculiarities of style and taste that provoked criticism, had yet substantial merits which procured for them a wide popularity. The writer had evidently spared no pains in the collection and collation of materials, and the purely narrative portion of the work, though too often interrupted by digressions and extraneous matter, was written with great vigor, conciseness,

and effect. His manner had one signal excellence, which would have atoned for many faults ; it was never feeble, prosy, or dull. One other quality it had, which contributed largely to the success of the work, though we are not sure that it will add to its merits in the estimation of posterity. It was animated throughout by a fervid spirit of patriotism ; a love of country too exalted to be discriminating, and an admiration of the American polity, which would brook no limitations and admit of no defects, colored his pages so highly, that the historian seemed to give place to the eulogist, and the leading personages of the story to be uniformly represented as saints or heroes. Foreigners are apt to ridicule such manifestations of national feeling, and even Americans would require its expression to be more temperate. The historian who would write for posterity must remember, that distance of time has the same effect as distance of place in sobering the judgment, and reducing all colors to a uniform neutral tint.

This volume comes to us too late for an extended examination at the present time ; but we may return to it at a future day. The title indicates some uncertainty of purpose, whether the period to which it relates is to be regarded as the concluding portion of the Colonial history of the country, or as the commencement of the Revolutionary period. Only the first half of the title, as we have cited it, appears on the proper title-page of the volume ; the remainder is inserted on a fly-leaf which follows the Table of Contents. A theory is here implied, which the author seems to hesitate about promulgating, that the minds of the Americans were really prepared for independence, and that the European Colonial System was actually overthrown, by events which took place between 1748 and 1763, and especially by the conquest of Canada. Much of the matter contained in this volume seems to have been collected and arranged with a view to the explanation and defence of this very doubtful proposition. The governors appointed by the crown were usually dependent upon the Colonial legislatures for their salaries ; and these popular representative bodies often manifested their dislike of the ruler who was placed over them, and of the principles of his administration, by curtailing his income, granting it only from year to year, or withholding it altogether. They adopted the time-honored policy of the English House of Commons, and other representative assemblies engaged in the defence of popular rights, by making the power of the purse, which was indisputably lodged in their hands, a means of controlling the whole policy of the administration. A Colonial governor was thus reduced to a very awkward dilemma ; if he yielded to the wishes of the assembly, the ministry deprived him of his place ; if he obeyed his instructions from the ministry, the assembly took away his salary. As

needy and greedy persons were usually appointed to these offices, we might expect to find their letters to the English ministry filled with complaints of "the levelling principles of the people of the Colonies," "the tendency of American legislatures to independence," "their unwarrantable presumption in 'declaring their own rights and privileges,' their ambitious efforts 'to wrest the administration from the king's officers' by refusing fixed salaries, and compelling the respective governors to annual capitulations for their support." Mr. Bancroft makes abundant citations from their correspondence, the greater part of which still exists only in manuscript, to prove that they entertained such views, and sent home such representations; but the question immediately arises, which he hardly seems to consider, whether such statements, obviously dictated by personal considerations, were not exaggerated and often wholly untrustworthy and false. If such charges had been made public at the time, it is certain that the Colonial legislatures would have branded them as calumnious and unfounded. At a much later period, long after the non-importation agreements and other active measures of opposition, when the Colonies were openly accused of aiming at independence, the leading patriots strenuously disavowed the charge, and asserted that they had no higher ambition than that of enjoying the ordinary privileges of British subjects. Washington, as late as October, 1774, declared "that no such thing [as independence] is desired by any thinking man in all North America." Jay affirmed that, "until after the second petition of Congress, in 1775, I never did hear an **American** of any class, or of any description, express a wish for the independence of the Colonies." Jefferson says, "before the commencement of hostilities, I never heard a whisper of a disposition to separate from Great Britain, and after that, its possibility was contemplated with affliction by all." Dickinson and John Adams, in equally decisive terms, bear testimony to the same fact. As we cannot believe that these men were ignorant of the dispositions and wishes of their countrymen at this momentous epoch, it will require stronger evidence than that of the avaricious and disappointed officers of the crown to convict them of tergiversation or falsehood. We cannot see any propriety, therefore, in designating the fifteen years which preceded the Peace of Paris as the First Epoch of the American Revolution, and the period of the Overthrow of the Colonial System. On the contrary, the system at that time appears to have been in full vigor and activity, the success of the war with France giving to it its largest development, and tempting English statesmen to consider it as a means of recruiting the exhausted treasury of the kingdom. They did not perceive what the sagacity of the ministers of France soon discovered, wherewith to

soothe their mortification under defeat, that the vast extension of the colonial dominion of England would be a swift agent in causing the downfall of the whole fabric. The system devised for the direction and control of a few feeble settlements on the Atlantic coast would be insufficient for the administration of the growing empire into which those settlements had now expanded.

But it is not our object at present to enter into discussion with Mr. Bancroft as to the correctness of the historical theories which he has expounded in this volume, but only to give a brief indication of its contents and character. His citations from the hitherto unpublished correspondence of the Colonial governors are curious and instructive, as they show who first conceived the plan of obtaining a fixed revenue from America, through a general system of taxation by parliamentary authority. The royal prerogative being found insufficient to effect this object, even the crown lawyers declaring that it could not be lawfully stretched to this end, these disappointed functionaries, smarting under the privation of their salaries, suggested that the omnipotence of Parliament, which no Englishman ever thought of denying, would furnish a remedy for the evil, and prevent the royal authority from falling into decay, and the royal officers into contempt. Clinton and Shirley, the governors of New York and Massachusetts, represented to the ministry, that the officers of the crown in America must be rendered independent of the Colonial assemblies, or they could not do their duty to the king; that for this purpose, a fixed revenue was indispensable; and "the most prudent method" of obtaining it "would be by application to parliament." The ministers, with the exception of the young Earl of Halifax, then serving as First Commissioner for the Plantations, do not seem at first to have paid much heed to these representations, probably because they detected the interested motives of those who made them. But the suggestions remained on file in the archives of the Board of Trade, to be brought forth and reduced to practice by the first rash minister, who, like George Grenville, released from the trouble and anxiety of a great war raging in both hemispheres, and pressed by the necessity of finding ways and means for the mountain of debt which has always been the price of England's glory, should think of opening a new and copious source of revenue in the vast colonial possessions which had just been vindicated and enlarged by the sword. How long the system would have remained untried but for the selfish representations of those who had so strong a personal interest in urging it, it were vain to conjecture. Probably not long, however; the want was too urgent, the temptation afforded by the rapid growth of colonial prosperity was too obvious and flattering. But Mr. Bancroft has not succeeded in

convincing us, that the plan was seriously entertained by the British ministry before the close of the war. Such evidence as he has been able to obtain is well summed up in the following paragraph, which is introduced while speaking of the preparations for Braddock's campaign, in 1755.

"I have had in my hands vast masses of correspondence, including letters from servants of the crown in every royal colony in America; from civilians, as well as from Braddock, and Dunbar, and Gage; from the popular Delancey and the moderate Sharpe, as well as from Dinwiddie and Shirley; and all were of the same tenor. The British ministry heard one general clamor from men in office for taxation by act of parliament. Even men of liberal tendencies looked to acts of English authority for aid. 'I hope that Lord Halifax's plan may be good and take place,' said Alexander, of New York. Hopkins, governor of Rhode Island, elected by the people, complained of the men 'who seemed to love and understand liberty better than public good and the affairs of state.' 'Little dependence,' said he, 'can be had on voluntary union.' 'In an act of parliament for a general fund,' wrote Shirley, 'I have great reason to think the people will readily acquiesce.'"

In this volume, as well as in the earlier portion of the work, Mr. Bancroft has devoted much space to an elaborate discussion of topics which have but a slender connection with the principal subject of his history. One whole chapter, the twelfth, is given to the progress of the Seven Years' War in Germany, the period selected being one that comprises the most brilliant victories of Frederic, while the subsequent portion of the struggle on the Continent, less marked with striking events, is passed over with little notice. In another chapter, the seventeenth, we have the whole story of the early policy of George III., the intrigues of Bute, and the withdrawal or expulsion of Pitt from the ministry in 1761, American affairs being hardly mentioned. In other portions of the volume, the history of parties in the English ministry is given with some minuteness, and the characters of the leading English statesmen are sketched with considerable vigor and discrimination. Perhaps we ought not to complain of these digressions; they give greater interest to the book as a work of art, by enlarging its scope, and bringing forward a variety of incidents and characters, with which the comparative meagre annals of America at this period may be embroidered. But they amount to a tacit confession that the subject which the historian has chosen is not broad enough for the full exercise of his powers. Mr. Bancroft likes to expatiate on a boundless theme, passing swiftly from one portion of it to another; here presenting a striking event, and there portraying a brilliant character, and coloring the whole with the glare of ambitious rhetoric and a somewhat overstrained republican philosophy. Perhaps the whole work may be best

characterized by a remark originally applied, we believe, to Napier's History of the War in Spain, that it is "very great, and very odd."

We cannot quite go along with our author in his estimate of the politics of Europe at this epoch, and of the merits of some of the leading personages who were then upon the stage. Frederic the Great, in particular, is elevated by him to a post which we believe that monarch himself was wholly unconscious of occupying, — that of the champion of "Protestantism, philosophic freedom, and the nascent democracy, in their struggle with the conspiracy of European prejudice and legitimacy, of priestcraft and despotism." We cannot admit that the Seven Years' War in Germany was a religious war, or that Austria and France embarked in it for the sake of advancing the power of Catholicism, and protecting "the superstitions of the Middle Age" against the advancing spirit of democracy, free opinion, and reform. Such a purpose would not be a very laudable one; but their actual motives were more criminal, and at the same time, more petty and selfish. Austria was eager to avenge the loss of Silesia by humiliating the sovereign who had robbed her of it; and for that purpose, the haughty Maria Theresa stooped to flatter and cajole the base courtesan who then held the destinies of France in her hands. On the other hand, Frederic had treated Madame de Pompadour with contempt, and even pelted her with stinging epigrams, — not because he had any reverence for virtue, his own life and character being stained with every form of turpitude, but because he had intellect enough to despise the base means and instruments of vice, even while he caused them to minister to his caprices. The two women, an Empress of unsullied fame and a shameless harlot, succeeded in forming what Chatham called "the most powerful and malignant confederacy that ever yet has threatened the independence of mankind;" they induced Russia, Sweden, and Saxony, — three powers which were certainly not very desirous of promoting the cause of Catholicism, — to join them, under a promise of sharing the spoils. Frederic, whose only object was to preserve intact the dominions which he had inherited and those which he had treacherously and without a color of right annexed to them, succeeded in baffling and defeating all his enemies, and the confederacy terminated in humiliation, as it had begun in dishonor. All the rhetoric of the historian cannot give dignity to such a meaningless and fruitless contest; Frederic showed marvellous qualities as a tactician and a diplomatist, but we cannot make a hero of him. As an ally of England against France, his merits have been sufficiently trumpeted by English writers; we do not see that Americans are called upon to join in the commendation.

The most interesting chapter in this volume is devoted to a general account of the condition of the "Old Thirteen" Colonies, at the time when Franklin formed the project of uniting them under one government, just before the outbreak of the war. This is a broad and vigorous sketch, drawn perhaps with too much freedom of pencil and depth of coloring, but generally truthful and always impressive. We annex, in conclusion, an extract from it, which is a fair specimen both of the beauties and faults of Mr. Bancroft's style.

"New York had been settled under large patents of lands to individuals; New England under grants to towns; and the institution of towns was its glory and its strength. The inhabited part of Massachusetts was recognized as divided into little territories, each of which, for its internal purposes, constituted a separate integral government, free from supervision, having power to choose annually its own officers; to hold meetings of all freemen at its own pleasure; to discuss in those meetings any subject of public interest; to see that every able-bodied man within its precincts was duly enrolled in the militia and always provided with arms, ready for immediate use; to elect and to instruct its representatives; to raise and appropriate money for the support of the ministry, of schools, of highways, of the poor, and for defraying other necessary expenses within the town. It was incessantly deplored by royalists of later days, that the law which confirmed these liberties had received the unconscious sanction of William the Third, and the most extensive interpretation in practice. Boston, even, on more than one occasion, ventured in town meeting to appoint its own agent to present a remonstrance to the Board of Trade. New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Maine, which was a part of Massachusetts, had similar regulations; so that all New England was an aggregate of organized democracies. But the complete development of the institution was to be found in Connecticut and the Massachusetts Bay. There each township was also substantially a territorial parish; the town was the religious congregation; the independent church was established by law; the minister was elected by the people, who annually made grants for his support. There, too, the system of free schools was carried to great perfection; so that there could not be found a person born in New England unable to write and read. He that will understand the political character of New England in the eighteenth century, must study the constitution of its towns, its congregations, its schools, and its militia.

"Yet in these democracies the hope of independence, as a near event, had not dawned. Driven from England by the persecution of the government, its inhabitants still clung with confidence and persevering affection to the land of their ancestry, the people of their kindred, and the nationality of their language. They were of homogeneous origin, nearly all tracing their descent to English emigrants of the reigns of Charles the First and Charles the Second. They were a frugal and industrious race. Along the seaside, wherever there was a good harbor, fishermen, familiar with the ocean, gathered in hamlets; and each returning season saw them with an ever increasing number of mariners and vessels, taking the cod and mackerel, and sometimes pursuing the



whale into the icy labyrinths of the Northern seas; yet loving home, and dearly attached to their modest freeholds. At Boston a society was formed for promoting domestic manufactures: on one of its anniversaries, three hundred young women appeared on the common, clad in homespun, seated in a triple row, each with a spinning-wheel, and each busily transferring the flax from the distaff to the spool. The town built 'a manufacturing house,' and there were bounties to encourage the workers in linen. How the Board of Trade were alarmed at the news! How they censured Shirley for not having frowned on the business! How committees of the House of Commons examined witnesses, and made proposals for prohibitory laws, till at last the Boston manufacturing house, designed to foster home industry, fell into decay, a commentary on the provident care of England for her colonies! Of slavery there was not enough to affect the character of the people, except in the southeast of Rhode Island, where Newport was conspicuous for engaging in the slave-trade, and where, in two or three towns, negroes composed even a third of the inhabitants.

"In the settlements which grew up in the interior, on the margin of the greenwood, the plain meeting-house of the congregation for public worship was everywhere the central point; near it stood the public school, by the side of the very broad road, over which wheels enough did not pass to do more than mark the path by ribbons in the sward. The snug farm-houses, owned as freeholds, without quitrents, were dotted along the way; and the village pastor among his people, enjoying the calm raptures of devotion, 'appeared like such a little white flower as we see in the spring of the year, low and humble on the ground, standing peacefully and lovingly in the midst of the flowers round about; all, in like manner, opening their bosoms to drink in the light of the sun.' In every hand was the Bible; every home was a house of prayer; in every village all had been taught, many had comprehended, a methodical theory of the divine purpose in creation, and of the destiny of man.

"Child of the Reformation, closely connected with the past centuries and with the greatest intellectual struggles of mankind, New England had been planted by enthusiasts who feared no sovereign but God. In the universal degeneracy and ruin of the Roman world, when freedom, laws, imperial rule, municipal authority, social institutions, were swept away, — when not a province, nor city, nor village, nor family was safe, Augustin, the African bishop, with a burning heart, confident that, though Rome tottered, the hope of man would endure, rescued from the wreck of the old world the truths that would renew humanity, and sheltered them in the cloister, among successive generations of men, who were insulated by their vows from decaying society, bound to the state neither by ambition, nor by allegiance, nor by the sweet attractions of wife and child.

"After the sighs and sorrows of centuries, in the dawn of serener days, an Augustine monk, having also a heart of flame, seized on the same great ideas, and he and his followers, with wives and children, restored them to the world. At his bidding, truth leaped over the cloister walls, and challenged every man to make her his guest; aroused every intelligence to acts of private judgment; changed a dependent, recipient people into a reflecting, inquiring people; lifted each human

being out of the castes of the Middle Age, to endow him with individuality, and summoned man to stand forth as man. The world heaved with the fervent conflict of opinion. The people and their guides recognized the dignity of labor; the oppressed peasantry took up arms for liberty; men revered and exercised the freedom of the soul. The breath of the new spirit moved over the earth; it revived Poland, animated Germany, swayed the North; and the inquisition of Spain could not silence its whispers among the mountains of the Peninsula. It invaded France; and though bonfires, by way of warning, were made of heretics, at the gates of Paris, it infused itself into the French mind, and led to unwonted free discussions. Exile could not quench it. On the banks of the Lake of Geneva, Calvin stood forth the boldest reformer of his day; not personally engaging in political intrigues, yet, by promulgating great ideas, forming the seedplot of revolution; bowing only to the Invisible; acknowledging no sacrament of ordination but the choice of the laity, no patent of nobility but that of the elect of God, with its seals of eternity."

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2. — 1. *Annual Report of the Progress of Chemistry and the Allied Sciences, Physics, Mineralogy, and Geology; including the Applications of Chemistry to Pharmacy, Medicine, Agriculture, the Arts, and Manufactures.* By JUSTUS LIEBIG, M. D., and H. KOPP, with the Coöperation of Buff, Dieffenbach, and Others, Professors in the University of Giessen. Edited by A. W. HOFFMAN, Ph. D., and W. DE LA RUE. London: Taylor, Walton, & Maberly. 2 vols. 8vo.
  2. *Annual of Scientific Discovery, or Year-Book of Facts in Science and Art, for 1852; exhibiting the most Important Discoveries and Improvements in Mechanics, Useful Arts, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, &c.* Edited by DAVID A. WELLS, A. M. Boston: Gould & Lincoln. 1852. 12mo. pp. 408.
  3. *Examinations of Drugs, Medicines, Chemicals, &c., as to their Purity and Adulterations.* By C. H. PEIRCE, M. D., Examiner of Medicines, etc., for the Port of Boston. Cambridge: John Bartlett. 1852. 12mo. pp. 264.

THESE reports of the development and application of chemistry and the allied sciences are a striking indication of the present popularity of scientific pursuits, of the number of laborers who are engaged in them, and of the zeal and success with which their researches are conducted. Already the first obstacle which